National Congress Bulletin

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AT HOME . . .

AT 700 NORTH RUSH STREET, CHICAGO

Dear P.T.A. President:——

WELCOME to your national parent-teacher home—a home that is truly your own, for you have helped build it! Make a note of the address, 700 North Rush Street, Chicago 11, Illinois. If you come this way on your summer vacation, do stop in. There are pleasant, colorful rooms where we can sit and talk.

• May 1 is traditionally moving day, but the National Congress never lets custom block its progress. By April 5 we had moved and were settled in. During the last few days of March the National Office staff attacked the gigantic chore of sorting, discarding, packing, and unpacking. You know the job. You've done it—probably more than once.

• Like other families with growing needs, the National Congress too has moved a number of times.

• Our first headquarters, a house in Washington, D. C., was provided and maintained from 1897 to 1899 through the generosity of Mrs. Hearst, one of our Founders. During parts of the administrations of Mrs. Birney and Mrs. Schoff, the first two national presidents, the only national office was the home of the national president. From 1908 to 1918 space was rented in the Washington Loan and Trust Building.

• Mrs. Newton P. Leonard cuts the ribbon to open our new headquarters as staff members Eleanor Twiss, Ruth A. Bottomly, Eva H. Grant, and Mary A. Ferre assist.

• In 1918 the Congress bought its first home—a house at 1314 Massachusetts Avenue in Washington, but the time was World War I and the building immediately became a club for servicemen. After the war the building, a private dwelling of thirty-six rooms, was found impractical and sold—fortunately at a profit. The Congress then leased space in the National Education Association office building in Washington until 1939. A more geographically centered location became desirable to serve our expanding membership, and in 1939 we moved to Chicago and rented space in an office building at 600 South Michigan Boulevard. We remained at that address until April 5, 1954.

• Now at long last we have realized our family dream—a home of our own. Of course, there's a mortgage on it, but together we shall work willingly and cheerfully to pay it off.

• Built through the united efforts of parents and teachers, our national home represents the unique and indivisible partnership of parent and teacher and the ever increasing cooperation of home and school.

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• Movers carry furniture for the new headquarters through the Rush Street entrance as Ruth A. Bottomly, administrative assistant to the president, and Roe Wright, business manager, look on.

• Built by voluntary contributions from members throughout the land, each giving according to his ability, this beautiful building is in itself a symbol of our membership. Drawing into warm, voluntary fellowship men and women of every age, color, creed, national origin, and occupation, our organization is a cross section of the population of America.

• This headquarters of ours—built of enduring granite and marble, tempered steel, and resistant limestone—is likewise a symbol of our permanence, our stability, and our strength. The parent-teacher organization has weathered many storms and perils. For more than half a century we have fought evil and ignorance whenever and wherever they have threatened children. Today in the face of the destructive forces that now menace the free world we continue to champion the right of children to healthy, satisfying, peaceful lives.

• Modern and functional, our national home represents our adaptability, our capacity to meet the unexpected with a fresh, courageous response. Despite our fifty-seven years, we are "blessedly young" and flexible, able to keep pace with a changing world and quick to meet the challenges of new problems.

• Our building embodies the plain virtues we believe in. Its quiet dignity is an affirmation of the faith that gives our organization its serenity, its confidence, and its secret reserve of strength—faith in the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man; faith in home and family and the love of parent and child.

• Our building is a memorial to our Founders and to the thousands of men and women before us who worked tirelessly, courageously, and intelligently to create a better world for children. But it is no dead monument to past achievements. It is a dynamic declaration of our intent to carry forward their work.

• Designed and constructed to enable us to work more efficiently and to expand our services, this memorial building is also a functional building.

It is a *communications* center, through which the local, state, and national P.T.A. organizations maintain close and continuous liaison.

It is a *publications* center, where National Congress publications—like this bulletin and our official magazine, the *National Parent-Teacher*—are prepared.

It is the *shipping* center from which our publications and communications from national officers and chairmen are distributed throughout the country.

It is a *coordinating* center, consolidating the work of all our parent-teacher groups and integrating our work with that of other child welfare and educational organizations.

It is a *conference* center, where parent-teacher leaders will meet to think and plan together for the welfare of children and youth.

It is an *educational* center. For into it will come and from it will be dispersed ideas and information to help us become better parents, teachers, and citizens.

• Above all, it is a *children's* center, for the focus of all the work carried on within its walls is the child. It is a center for promoting *peace* and preserving *freedom*. For only as free citizens in a peaceful world can our children be assured of their human right to happy, useful, creative living.

• In a few short weeks we shall gather in Atlantic City for our 1954 convention. As we meet and work together we shall be strengthening the power for good that is symbolized in our national parent-teacher home. Will you be there? I hope so. We need you.

Loyally yours,

Lucille P. Leonard

MRS. NEWTON P. LEONARD, *President*
National Congress of Parents and Teachers

FLASH—

Total membership of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers has reached a record high of

8,822,694

in the period ending April 15, 1954.

Our national president and members of the Board of Managers extend their heartfelt congratulations to all who have made this enrollment possible.

WHAT OUR CONGRESS PARENT-TEACHER GROUPS *Are Doing*

Surveying the Schools

It was headline news in Waynesboro, Virginia, when the parent-teacher council made its full-dress report on existing school conditions to the local school board this winter. The daily *News Virginian* devoted three pages to the group's thoroughgoing survey of student enrollment and school facilities. With the facts it uncovered, the council was able to present the board with alternative proposals for school construction in the next four years.

P.T.A. members and other interested citizens were on hand for the public discussion of the findings the following night. The council (composed of Jackson-Wilson P.T.A. and Waynesboro High School P.T.A.) displayed charts illustrating classroom loads, building deficiencies, and present and projected enrollment throughout the community. It then submitted two programs for elementary school construction. Each would provide the same number of new classrooms by 1959 but would spread the building over different intervals.

To Mrs. Lewis Spilman, state publicity chairman, goes the credit for arranging the extensive newspaper coverage. Throughout the research project the council had the approval and support of the school board. Now that the information has been gathered, swift action on school plant improvement seems likely in Waynesboro.

NATIONAL CONGRESS BULLETIN

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Symbols of Brotherhood

There's a special librarian in charge of dolls at Fellowship House, a recreational center in Kansas City, Missouri. She visits scout troops, Sunday school classes, and schoolrooms, taking along a large black suitcase containing twelve dolls that each represent a famous person such as Abraham Lincoln, Mahatma Gandhi, Albert Einstein, or St. Francis of Assisi. The children have fun identifying them. After the librarian has told their stories, she asks the children to explain how these persons are different and yet alike. The same answer is expressed in many ways.

"They were all friendly and kind."

"They all did things for other people."

"They look different from the outside, but they're all alike on the inside."

In this way the message of brotherhood takes on new meaning for the children. Recently, in honor of Founders Day, the Fairfax P.T.A. presented a doll representing Mrs. Alice McLellan Birney, co-founder of the parent-teacher movement, to Friendship House. To make sure that the doll really looked like Mrs. Birney, the unit wrote to her daughter, Mrs. Howard Walker of Washington, D.C., for details of her mother's appearance.

Mrs. Walker replied, "She was a very pretty woman with a lovely smile . . . She was very slim, and her eyes were gray and her hair chestnut brown." Members of the unit believe they have a faithful representation of Mrs. Birney in the doll. It will take its place beside the others in the traveling collection.

Action Against Accidents

The accent is on safety these days as a growing number of P.T.A.'s concentrate on curbing home and traffic accidents. In Milwaukee, Wisconsin, the Hi-Mount P.T.A. launched a bicycle safety campaign last spring that has since been adopted by the city safety commission. In Rhode Island the state congress sponsored a display of more than fifty posters throughout the state urging motorists to drive carefully during the holiday season.

The Hi-Mount program includes a thorough test of the rider and his bicycle. More than two hundred youngsters at the school have passed the written exam, completed the proficiency check, and submitted their bikes for safety inspection. P.T.A. members and police officers have cooperated in conducting the project. Other local units have followed suit. The city safety commission now plans to publish a technical manual and devise work kits for Milwaukee schools based on the experiences of Hi-Mount P.T.A.

A Few Words in Your Ear

Mrs. Karl Janssen, radio and television chairman of the Oklahoma Congress, knows the value of spot announcements. Just thirty-nine words (the length of one spot) can bring the P.T.A. message into the radio listener's home. Mrs. Janssen prepared a series of these announcements, accurately clocked for delivery, just before school opened last fall. She relayed them to councils and other parent-teacher groups, adding a suggestion that they develop their own for local stations. Most of these messages concentrate on promoting the *National Parent-Teacher* as the best interpreter of the current parent-teacher program.

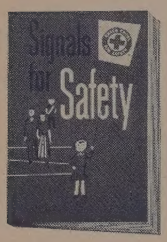
• When the Mississippi Conference of Social Workers opened this winter, the Biloxi Council was represented with this exhibit of Congress publications. The mounted posters swing out on hinged doors to permit a full view from both sides. The exhibit was so popular that the council was invited to present it at the state congress convention in April.

A Review of

SIGNALS FOR SAFETY

by Alice M. Carlson, Editor

*Safety Education**



"The P.T.A. can make safety a habit, a way of life. To this end it stands ready to help parents and teachers and young people acquire the needed information, skills, and attitudes, and together work for safer homes, safer schools, and safer communities."

With this introduction, the P.T.A. sets a pattern for a 64-page outline for safety for children at home and at school. Outlining always the role of the parent, the booklet fulfills its stated purpose well, incidentally provides some detailed safety information for the parents themselves.

The booklet is organized logically around a formula for safety set down in the first chapter: that "protection means making living safe for the child, whereas education means making the child safe for living." The first half of the book is thus concerned with the infant and preschool child, when protection is of greater importance and education for safety comes only gradually into prominence. The second half of the book is concerned solely with safety education, particularly as seen at school.

In the early pages, when discussing infant and preschool safety, the chapters become almost a single guide for home safety for the entire family. As a consequence, any housewife and mother, city or rural, might increase safety in her home from a reading of its pages. And while this section is primarily devoted to providing a safe environment, beginnings of education for safety are also stated—and stated so simply that any parent can intelligently start training for safety as soon as the horizons of the preschool child's world begin to enlarge.

In the second half the authors attempt to give any parent an insight into just how his child will be taught at school to look out for his own safety. Since many subjects—safety in the school plant, walking, bicycling, driving, school bus transportation, and others—are treated in just twenty pages, it is understandable that not too much space is devoted to any one. However, there is enough detail to make clear what any school should be doing in safety education today, as well as to point out the part the P.T.A. can play in this program. Cooperation with school authorities is stressed throughout: there are additional sensible suggestions for parents who must take over the role of teacher when, for example, there is no driver education course in the local high school.

Finally and logically the booklet points out specific safety projects which a P.T.A. safety committee can sponsor in cooperation with school and community, adds helpful information on where further and continuing safety data may be found. From this aspect, the book belongs on the home desk of every P.T.A. safety chairman.

*Reprinted by permission from the April 1954 issue.

American Education Week

• Twenty million parents are expected to accept the invitation of the public schools to visit classrooms during American Education Week, November 7 to 14. Schools across the country will hold open house for the public during this thirty-fourth observance. Cosponsors of the week are the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, the National Education Association, the U.S. Office of Education, and the American Legion.

The keynote will be "Good Schools Are Your Responsibility." Says the sponsoring committee, "Wishing for good schools is not enough. Communities have good schools when the people want them enough to take an interest in them, to work for them, to cooperate with them." In giving parents a chance to see classrooms in action, these four groups are winning new support and greater understanding for our educational system.

• A total of 50,687 copies of *Signals for Safety* was distributed free to all state congresses in February 1954.

• For the American Education Week parade in Bibb County, Georgia, last year, members of Joseph Clisby P.T.A. appeared with this float of a "well-rounded program for education."

REMINDER . . . *To 50-OR-MORE Club Members!*

• Here's a reminder for all present an prospective members of the Fifty-o More Club: The June-July issue of th *National Congress Bulletin* will preser a complete list of club members as c March 31, 1954. To qualify, local uni must have submitted a total of fift or more subscriptions to the *Nationa Parent-Teacher*, together with the fo lowing information:

1. **The number of subscription forwarded (fifty or more from April 1, 1953 to Marc 1, 1954.**
2. **The date they were sent.**
3. **The name of the P.T.A.**
4. **The city and state where lo cated.**
5. **The name of the unit presi dent.**

The names of all associations qual fying for the Fifty-or-More or the Hur dred-or-More Club will also be poste at the 1954 national convention in A lantic City. The appearance of this lis is an annual event.